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## The Decorator and Furnisher,

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THE impertinent intrusion of the business affairs of a newspaper upon its readers is fortunately as a rule confined to the daily press. The subscribers to a journal like this know little and care less about its domestic economy. So long as it fills a want they feel, they are satisfied; when it fails to do this they cease to be its patrons. But so much has been said in the public prints about the recent change in the proprietorship of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER, that a word between those alone interested may not be inappropriate. There will be no change in the general policy which has already placed the magazine at the head of all publications of the kind. Largely increased resources and an expenditure even more liberal than that which has characterized its conduct in the past, will doubtless result in proportionately adding to the value of the magazine and making it still more useful to the large and growing class who are interested in the subjects of which it treats. Numerous new features will be added and the scope of the journal widened so far as possible within the well-defined limits it has established for itself from the outset.

AND while talking of ourselves we may perhaps be excused for the expression of what our readers will doubtless consider to be a pardonable pride in the appearance of this number of the magazine. It would be useless when dealing with a class of readers such as form the clientele of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER, to make more than a passing mention of Mr. R. W. Rattray's admirable work on the cover, which comes with the present issue. Our readers have more than once been under obligations to this most graceful of America's decorative artists. They will recognize the same masterly hand in the comprehensive and thoughtful sketch which greets them as they receive this copy of the paper. It will also afford them gratification to learn that Mr. Rattray's pencil will be frequently employed in our columns during the coming year.

WHETHER in politics or religion or art the daily mail of a widely circulated journal is an unerring index of the direction of thought and feeling in any section of the country. Judged by this standard the taste for decorative art must be growing rapidly in the far West. At no time in the past five years has the receipt of subscriptions to THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER from the Pacific Slope been so large as at present, and the inquiries which come to us touching materials

## THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

and methods in home decoration are more varied and numerous than ever before. An illustration of the growth of this taste in one State is to be found in the fact that the San Francisco News Letter has for some time been publishing weekly two and even three heliotype representations of "The Artistic Homes of California." That its enterprise is appreciated is creditable alike to it and to its patrons.

THE title at the head of the preceding page is also worthy of mention. In it Mr. Edward Dewson symbolizes "Book Lore" and "Illustrative Art." Our readers will be pleased to know that Mr. Dewson also will be a frequent contributor to future issues of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

WE are often asked for reliable tests of old artistic furniture. Unfortunately no formula can be devised that will insure a buyer of old furniture against making mistakes. The lessons that will benefit most will be gained from such mistakes. The framework may be what it professes to be, for it pays better to buy old sideboards and secretaires made originally in plain wood, and add the inlaying and the carving, than to make the whole thing new from the foundation. Some of the results of this enriching process—to use the trade term, are quite equal to the old work. Although the business of thus meeting the demand for old work without the trouble of hunting it up is dishonest, there is no doubt that such dealers have greatly encouraged artistic workmanship in good marquetry or old furniture; beside which the trade have discovered that the present passion for old furniture is not a mere caprice, that it is quite distinct from the taste for the antique, and has its root in a genuine preference for certain types of furniture which were made a century ago, and which it is their interest to supply as well it was that of their predecessors.

THE beautiful white enamel with wavy gloss usually combined with gilding in such articles as chairs, is thus produced: First the wood is primed with a composition consisting of three parts turpentine and one part linseed oil, japan size being used as a dryer. On this drying thoroughly the work is rubbed down until perfectly smooth. Next two or three coats of pure white lead are applied, mixed entirely flat. Each coat is rubbed down, time being allowed for each to dry. Equal parts of lead and zinc are used for the next coat, and three-fourths zinc and one-fourth lead for the one succeeding. After this has become thoroughly hard, it is rubbed down very smooth. A thin coat of color, made of zinc and turpentine, is now rubbed on; for the next coat the same flat color is used, with the addition of about one-half the quantity of good light coach varnish. For the last coat enough zinc is used in the varnish to make it white. If the last coat of zinc is not white or solid enough more coats are put on until it is perfectly white and solid before varnishing. If the work is to be gilded or striped the zinc must be omitted in the last coat of varnish.

HOW few have realized the fact that to the presence of oxygen the ochres or earth-paints owe their colors, they being simply earthy substances, mainly silica—itsself more than half oxygen by weight—colored by water impregnated by iron rust. Oxygen, with white lead in varying proportions, gives us the paint, combined with chrome acid gives us the paint which beautifies and preserves our dwellings. From oxygen with zinc we have the beautiful white pigment, oxide of zinc. With iron and potash the action of this invisible agent affords the beautiful color known as Prussian blue. From the oxides of copper we obtain verdigris and the brilliant pigment known as Paris green. With chromium we have the greens and yellows known as chrome colors. Yet this simple substance, which makes up more than one-half of the ponderable matter of the earth, is without color, taste or smell, and the eye of man has never beheld it.

TURNER is said to have remarked when he heard of a new shade of color having been invented, "It's a pity," but though wonders may be accomplished in decorative work with a few colors, we cannot have too many choice compounds to select from and combine. The colorist cannot too closely study nature, which abounds in compound hues, but for this a pictorial eye is necessary. Fine coloring is essentially one of the foundations of the art of painting.

WITH orientals art receives an idolatrous regard, but they never depart from the recognized styles which have received the stamp of tradition, even when indulging in grotesque representations. In Moorish decoration the type appears to have suggested the general form of the ornament. There

is no random introduction of ornament just dotted down without reference to that type. However irregular the space to fill designers and colorists always commenced by dividing it into equal areas, whereas the Japanese avoid equal division of parts, seeking symmetry by a certain balance of dissimilar parts, not even numerically even. Whilst exceeding all other Eastern nations in variety of design, both their designs and colors are wanting in coördination, though the details are worked out with such fancy and good taste that they become exceedingly interesting

THE statement that the Italian government has decided to appropriate money for the excavation of the buried city of Sybaris, will be received with pleasure by everyone who remembers the valuable results which followed upon the unearthing of Pompeii. For Pompeii was after all but a village as compared with Sybaris. Making all due allowances for the exaggeration of ancient writers, the latter city was undoubtedly one of the wealthiest and most luxurious of which we have any record in the past. When the Cortonian army over 500 years before Christ vanquished its enervated populace, they turned the river Crais upon its site with a view of wiping the town from the face of the earth. For 2,400 years it has lain buried beneath the silt which the river deposited upon it. With the aid of the Athenians the survivors some years later founded the town of Thurii near the place, but from that day no trace of the buried city has ever been discovered. Doubtless the conquerors carried off with them many articles of golden and silver luxury, but there must yet remain countless art treasures gathered by a people who in their day were the business masters of a population numbering several millions. The fabled beds of rose leaves have long since moulded into dust, but there possibly exists many imperishable monuments of the cunning artificers whose skill in catering to the wealthy inhabitants had made the name of Sybarite synonymous with luxurious beauty.

THE constantly increasing demand for bound volumes of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER has nearly exhausted the supply of certain numbers. We will pay \$2 each for copies of the issue of October, 1882; \$1 for those of January, 1884, and 50 cents for October, 1884, if in good condition.



NOVEMBER.

A MONTHLY SERIES OF PANEL SKETCHES, BY F. L. PENET.